

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /059 W

-----128176 222104Z /66

R 221926Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2932

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 10416

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: AREILZA EMERGES AGAIN

1. SUMMARY. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA RETURNED TO THE HUSTINGS ON DECEMBER 20 WITH A WELL-ATTENDED MADRID SPEECH, IN WHICH HE CRITICIZED THE GOVT AND IMPLICITLY PRESENTED HIMSELF AS THE MODERATE ALTERNATIVE TO SUAREZ. THOUGH NOT A SERIOUS CHALLENGER TO SUAREZ, AREILZA BEARS WATCHING AS A POSSIBLE EXTRAMURAL DRAG ON THE UCD CRYSTALLIZATION PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

2. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER JOSE MARIA DE AREILZA (THE COUNT OF MOTRICO) MADE A MUCH PUBLICIZED "REENTRY" INTO SPANISH
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POLITICS ON DECEMBER 20, WITH A SPEECH BEFORE AN OVERFLOW CROWD OF MORE THAN 1000 AT MADRID'S ESTABLISHMENT "CENTURY XXI CLUB." IN HIS SPEECH, TITLED "MY VISION OF THE DEMOCRATIC STATE," AREILZA PREDICTABLY OFFERED HIMSELF, ALBEIT ONLY IMPLICITLY, AS THE MODERATE ALTERNATIVE TO SUAREZ.

3. LABELING HIMSELF A MAN OF THE RIGHT, AREILZA CALLED ON THE SPANISH MIDDLE CLASS--WHICH HE CONSIDERED THE VAST MAJORITY (60-70) OF SPANIARDS--TO COME TOGETHER AND TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN COMPLETING THE TASK OF FASH-IONING A DEMOCRATIC STATE.

4. THE SUAREZ GOVT, HE CHARGED, DID NOT HAVE FAITH IN ITSELF. NOR DID IT HAVE AN IDEOLOGY, AN ARTICULATED PLAN OF ANY KIND, OR A SENSE OF PRIORITIES. NOWHERE WAS THIS CLEARER THAN ON THE DEVOLUTION OF POWER QUESTION, WHERE MANY BELIEVE MISTAKENLY THAT LOCAL AUTONOMY WOULD SOLVE OTHER, UNRELATED PROBLEMS.

5. AREILZA ALSO ATTACKED EUROCOMMUNISM ("NO VALID OPTION FOR SPAIN") AND DESCRIBED SOCIALISM MORE AS A PERPETUAL OPPOSITION FORCE THAN A REAL GOVERNING ALTERNATIVE. SOCIALISM, HE SAID, COEXISTED WITH THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURES OF THE MIDDLE CLASS, NOT IN ORDER TO DESTROY THEM BUT TO PROVIDE A POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE, A STIMULUS, A BALANCE, A CHECK.

6. ALTHOUGH AREILZA'S PRESENTATION WAS ATTENDED BY A NUMBER OF POLITICAL PERSONALITIES, INCLUDING CALVO SOTELO (UCD), VILLAR ARREGUI (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT) AND SATRUSTEGUI (LIBERAL), NO GOVT FIGURE REPORTEDLY WAS IN ATTENDANCE, NOT EVEN HIS SON-IN-LAW, PUBLIC WORKS
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MINISTER JOAQUIN GARRIGUES.

7. AREILZA TOLD REPORTERS DURING THE POST-SPEECH DINNER AT THE CLUB THAT HE HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE PROFFERED PRESIDENCY OF THE RECENTLY FORMED LIBERAL FEDERATION (FL). BUT THE MADRID PRESS REPORTED DECEMBER 22 THAT FL SOURCES INDICATED HE HAD INDEED ACCEPTED THE OFFER. THE FEDERATION CONSISTS OF A NUMBER OF INSIGNIFICANT, NON-UCD LIBERAL MINI-GROUPS, INCLUDING LARROQUE'S LIBERAL PARTY (PL), GARCIA DE MADARIAGA'S PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY (PPL), THE GALICIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDG) OF RAMON PAIS, SENILLOSA'S CATALAN POPULAR PARTY (PPC), AND THE INDEPENDENT LIBERAL PARTY (PLI) OF BERNAT. THE GROUPEL OF SATRUSTEGUI (LIBERAL ALLIANCE--AL) REMAINS OUTSIDE.

8. AREILZA IS A MAN OF FORMIDABLE INTELLECT AND DRIVE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE IS IN HIS LATE SIXTIES. BUT HIS IMPACT HERE HAS BEEN POLITICALLY VITIATED BY THE FACT THAT HE HAS BEEN ALL OVER THE LOT POLITICALLY. A SELF-DESCRIBED "CIVILIZED RIGHTIST," HE LEFT THE GOVT IN A HUFF WHEN HE WAS NOT MADE PRIME MINISTER AFTER THE

FIRING OF ARIAS IN 1976. HE THEN HELD MUCH PUBLICIZED "PRIVATE" TALKS WITH CONSERVATIVE WARHORSE MANUEL FRAGA AND CURRENT CULTURE MINISTER PIO CABANILLAS, AND FINALLY CAME DOWN AS VICE PRESIDENT, TO CABANILLAS, OF THE CENTER-RIGHT POPULAR PARTY (PP).

9. HOWEVER, WHEN THE SUAREZ-DIRECTED UCD FORMATION PROCESS BEGAN TO MAKE REAL PROGRESS, IT QUICKLY BECAME CLEAR THAT THERE WOULD BE ROOM FOR ONLY ONE STAR BILLING ON THE PARTY MARQUEE. THE PP ENTERED UCD AND AREILZA WITHDREW FROM THE PARTY AND THEN SAT OUT THE ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH

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FLIRTING AT TIMES WITH VARIOUS GROUPS, INCLUDING THE PSOE. HE HAD CONSIDERABLY EARLIER HAD A CONTACT WITH PCE LEADER CARRILLO WHEN THE LATTER WAS STILL IN EXILE.

10. AREILZA CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED AT "CENTURY XXI" THAT HE STILL CAN DRAW A CROWD, BUT THE FACT THAT HE HAS NO DEMONSTRATED POPULAR FOLLOWING OR ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONAL BASE, COMBINED WITH HIS REPUTATION AS AN OPPORTUNIST AND HIS POOR RELATIONS WITH THE KING (ALTHOUGH HE IS A MONARCHIST), DISQUALIFY HIM AS A SERIOUS CHALLENGER TO SUAREZ. NEVERTHELESS, HE ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL USE

THE PLATFORM PROVIDED HIM BY HIS REPORTED PRESIDENCY
OF THE LIBERAL FEDERATION TO APPEAL TO UCD'S DISAFFECTED,
AND IF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS CONTINUE TO WORSEN HE MAY TURN
OUT TO BE MORE THAN JUST A FLY IN THE LOCAL POLITICAL
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
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Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 147524
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To: STATE
Type: TE
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Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009